

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 3968

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, IT, KN

SUBJ: ITALIAN-NORTH KOREAN RELATIONS

1. EMBOFF CHECKED WITH CHIEF OF MFA'S EAST ASIAN POLITICAL DESK (SALIMEI) TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER THERE IS ANY SUBSTANCE TO RUMORS THAT A NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION CURRENTLY IN ROME TO ATTEND THE SOCIALIST PARTY CONGRESS WOULD HOLD EXPLORATORY TALKS WITH ITALIAN OFFICIALS ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLO-MATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN NORTH KOREA AND ITALY. SALIMEI DENIED THAT ANY TALKS HAVE BEEN HELD AND STRESSED THAT VISAS WERE ISSUED IN MOSCOW TO THE THREE-MEMBER NORTH KOREAN DELEGATION ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ATTENDING THE SOCIALIST CONGRESS.

2. SALIMEI THEN WENT ON TO NOTE IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE THAT THE NORTH KOREANS, THROUGH THEIR OBSERVER TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN GENEVA, HAVE APPROACHED FOUR EC COUNTRIES, THE NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM, LUXEMBOURG
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AND IRELAND, CONCERNING THE POSSIBILITY OF THE

OBSERVER MAKING VISITS TO THE FOUR CAPITALS FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. THE DUTCH RESPONDED NEGATIVELY TO THE REQUEST. BELGIUM AND LUXEMBOURG RESPONDED THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE OPPOSED TO A VISIT PROVIDED THAT THE NORTH KOREAN REPRESENTATIVE DID NOT RPT NOT RAISE THE QUESTION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND THAT IT WOULD BE DISCREET WITH NO SENIOR LEVEL APPOINTMENTS WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. THE IRISH GOVERNMENT ALSO TOOK A NEGATIVE POSITION, BUT BEFORE ITS INSTRUCTIONS REACHED GENEVA, THE NORTH KOREAN OBSERVER HAD RETURNED TO HIS CAPITAL.

3. SINCE THE ITALIANS HAD BEEN TOLD THAT THE NORTH KOREAN ALSO INTENDED TO CONTACT THEM, THEY PROVIDED INSTRUCTIONS TO THEIR MISSION IN GENEVA FOR USE AT THE TIME OF ANY POSSIBLE APPROACH. THE ITALIAN MISSION WAS TO DISCOURAGE ANY PLANS BY THE NORTH KOREAN OBSERVER TO VISIT ROME AND TO INFORM HIM THAT THE ITALIAN POSITION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS REMAINED NEGATIVE. ADDITIONALLY, THE NORTH KOREAN WAS TO BE TOLD THAT AT THIS STAGE THE MOST APPROPRIATE STEP TO IMPROVE BILATERAL RELATIONS WOULD BE TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING COMMERCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WHICH HAS BEEN IN ABEYANCE FOR SOME MONTHS BECAUSE OF NORTH KOREAN INACTION. FINALLY, THE INSTRUCTIONS SUGGESTED THAT THE NORTH KOREANS SHOULD MORE APPROPRIATELY RAISE MATTERS OF THIS NATURE THROUGH THE ITALIAN EMBASSY IN PEKING WHICH IS THE ESTABLISHED CHANNEL FOR COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE NORTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT AND ITALY.

4. ALSO, IN CONFIDENCE, SALIMEI REPORTED THAT THE EC POLITICAL DIRECTORS AT A RECENT MEETING IN LUXEMBOURG CONFIRMED THE LONG STANDING COMMUNITY POLICY OF NOT RECOGNIZING NORTH KOREA. THE ONLY COUNTRY WHICH NOW FEELS SOMEWHAT UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT THE SUBJECT IS GREAT BRITAIN WHICH HAS JURIDICAL PROBLEMS IN TERMS OF THE FORMULA IT UTILIZES IN RECOGNIZING STATES, ALTHOUGH THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAS CONFIDENTIAL

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ALWAYS WEIGHED IN WITH THE POLITICAL ARGUMENTS ON THE SUBJECT. AS FAR AS THE BRITISH ARE CONCERNED THEY ARE CONTENT TO LET THE ISSUE LIE DORMANT AND HOPE THAT THE MATTER IS NOT RAISED PUBLICLY IN THE PARLIAMENT OR ELSEWHERE AT WHICH TIME IT WOULD BECOME DIFFICULT TO DEFEND THE PRESENT NON-RECOGNITION STANCE.VOLPE

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